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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR CROCKER AND HUMAN RIGHTS MINISTER'S  
AUGUST 2 MEETING

Classified By: Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (S) SUMMARY: During an August 2 meeting with Ambassador Crocker, USAID Mission Director Bambi Arellano, and Rule of Law (RoL) Coordinator Jim Santelle, Human Rights Minister Wijdan Salim discussed the following subjects:

- problems within the Iraqi detention system (including alleged disappearances, torture, and overcrowding),
- the Ministry of Human Rights' (MoHR) detention center inspections,
- MNF-I detainee release processes,
- the Inter-ministerial Committee on Rule of Law and detention,
- potential capacity support for the MoHR.

Ambassador Crocker told Minister Wijdan he would engage the PM on including her at the Ministerial Committee for National Security (MCNS) meetings. RoL Coordinator Santelle said he would discuss with MNF-I ways to provide the Minister documentation of Coalition detainee releases and transfers. USAID Mission Director Arellano said she would help the MoHR explore USG capacity building options. END SUMMARY.

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MINISTER WIJDAN DETAILS IRAQI DETENTION CENTER PROBLEMS  
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12. (S) Referring to the situation in Iraqi detention centers during an August 2 meeting, Human Rights Minister Wijdan Salim told the Ambassador, "We must admit we have problems and we must have solutions." She said the problems included disappearances, torture, overcrowding, and slow judicial processing. The Minister showed the Ambassador a letter from Sunni Vice President (VP) Tariq al-Hashimi that referenced an attached clipping of a Los Angeles Times report on conditions within the Adalah detention facility (also known as the Ministry of Interior (MoI) Khadimiya 2nd National Police Detention Center). The Minister commented that the report resembled the MoHR's detention center inspection reports and then quipped, "They (Tawafuq) are going from the government because of me."

13. (S) Minister Wijdan told the Ambassador that detainees disappear from Iraqi detention centers, and computer records documenting detainees often do not exist or are deleted intentionally. Reports of disappearances increased, "especially after the Baghdad Security Plan." She said the MoHR has also documented two cases in which the bodies of detainees, whose names were recorded in detention center databases, were found in morgues. She noted that detainees sometimes disappear even after being visited by family-members, offering a specific anecdote of one woman whose husband reportedly disappeared from Adalah after she had gone to visit him. The Minister said she had another case where the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) sent her a letter

acknowledging the presence of a particular detainee, but subsequently told her that his name was "not in the computer." She also provided details on the case of an Iraqi who was reportedly released in error into Iranian custody with five Iranians, but the Iraqi Embassy in Teheran had no record of the detainee's entry into Iran. The Minister stated some of the cases are being investigated, but there have been no answers.

14. (S) The Minister also described detainee abuse cases. She said some detainees transferred from Adalah to an overflow detention center in the Mansour area of Baghdad told her that while at Adalah, they were subjected to cold temperature abuse and burned with drops of melted nylon, and then showed her burn marks on their skin. The Minister said the MoHR documented the case of a detainee who had been badly tortured at the Ministry of Defense (MoD) military intelligence (M2) detention center at the Old Muthanna air base in Baghdad, and was transferred to the MoJ's Site 1 facility. She also stated that prosecutors were investigating an alleged rape of a detainee that reportedly occurred at a Baghdad police station a week ago. The Minister told the Ambassador that not a single person been charged in these cases, although there have been administrative punishments of officials, such as transferring them to other locations.

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HUMAN RIGHTS MINISTER IDENTIFIES MOST SERIOUS PROBLEMS  
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15. (S) Minister Wijdan told the Ambassador the biggest detention-related problems were overcrowding due to insufficient numbers of investigative judges for judicial processing, lack of information in detainee files, and also

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the killing of Sh'ia detainees released at Badoush prison in Mosul by al-Qa'ida. The Minister noted there are now judges going to every detention facility and that an investigative judge who recently processed cases at the MoD's 3rd Brigade, 6th Division detention center in Baghdad found that 650 detainees had been there for three months without being investigated, with 599 of the 650 detainees accused of terrorism. Many detainee files, she said, lacked basic information such as the length of detention and case descriptions. She reported that in response to her report of the situation at Badoush, Prime Minister (PM) Maliki ordered that Badoush's detainees be transported to the MoJ prison at Fort Suse in Sulaymaniyah for their releases; however, she said that released detainees' families have encountered difficulties entering Kurdistan to meet them. The Minister also complained that the Ministry of Health refuses to provide medicine for detention centers, questioning the value of providing it to "terrorists" and "criminals." Detention center staff, she noted, therefore have resorted to buying medicine from the private sector.

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MINISTER WIJDAN ON DETENTION CENTER INSPECTIONS  
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16. (S) Minister Wijdan said that the MoHR's staff can now enter any GOI detention facility to conduct inspections at "any place, any time." She reported that several times in the past, the Interior Ministry ordered its staff not to allow MoHR inspection teams to enter its facility; however, PM Maliki resolved the problem. The Minister told the Ambassador that due to increased public attention on conditions at Adalah, the MoHR's staff began visiting it up to two times a week. She said that the teams do not document "torture" unless they have a doctor present who can evaluate injuries. When a doctor is not present, the teams use a checklist and diagram to record the scars and wounds they observe, and the case is referred to a doctor for further investigation. The Minister said that MoHR employees are often threatened for their work, for which they are paid

relatively little.

17. (S) The Minister also told the Ambassador that she is ready to restart perhaps by "next week" the MoHR-led inter-ministerial joint inspections of Iraqi detention facilities that are supported by the Coalition through Task Force 134. The Ambassador encouraged the Minister to conduct inspections frequently, which could help keep would-be abusers honest and prevent exaggerated claims.

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RELEASE AND TRANSFER OF DETAINEES BY COALITION  
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18. (S) The Minister asked the Ambassador for help obtaining information on the Coalition's release of and transfer of detainees. She said that although Task Force 134 (which manages Coalition detentions) tells her each month there are approximately 250 Coalition-held detainees recommended for release, she has never received proof of the releases. The Minister also said that when the Coalition transfers detainees from Badoush to Fort Suse, the Coalition signs documents showing they removed the detainees; however, the management at Badoush does not receive documentation showing receipt of the detainees at Fort Suse. The Minister added that Iraqi detention center staff cannot accompany detainees during the Coalition's transfers, because the transporting aircraft do not schedule a return trip. Rule of Law Coordinator Santelle told Minister Wijdan he would work with Task Force 134 to see what could be done regarding both of these issues.

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INTER-MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE ON ROL AND DETENTIONS  
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19. (S) Minister Wijdan told the Ambassador that there was a MoHR representative at the August 1 meeting of the inter-ministerial committee for RoL and detainees, which PM Maliki established in mid-June. The Ambassador suggested to the Minister that at least once per month, the committee should generate a report including recommendations on improving RoL and detentions to the MCNS, as chartered. The Minister replied that she had never agreed that the committee should report to the MCNS -- or for that matter, any security group -- and in her opinion, a RoL committee ought to report directly to the PM or at least a judicial entity. She complained that she is never invited to MCNS meetings,

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despite having asked several times to be included. The Ambassador told Minister Wijdan that he would engage with PM Maliki to make sure she is included in MCNS meetings.

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POTENTIAL USG CAPACITY-DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT TO MOHR  
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110. (C) The Ambassador asked Minister Wijdan whether the MoHR needs further capacity-development, and replied that she is receiving support from the United Nations Mission in Iraq (UNAMI), Canada, and Denmark. Minister Wijdan said the MoHR still needs training to develop a report-writing team, capable of drafting an annual human rights report that would be presentable to the United Nations in Geneva. The Minister added that Iraq has signed five human rights treaties, but has not presented any reports on them. USAID Mission Director Arellano offered to coordinate with the MoHR to explore whether USG-funded capacity-development options would help meet the ministry's needs.

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